Literature Department of the
Board of Home Missions and the Woman's Executive Committee
of the Presbyterian Church,
156 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

A Native Missionary in Alaska

The following sketch was prepared by Mrs. J. F. Pingry, in whose home Miss Willard spent the four years of her school life in Elizabeth, New Jersey.

The interest in Alaska as a country is constantly increasing, and that in the people keeps pace, for no more interesting mission field can be found in which to work than that which is afforded by this far-away territory.

Among the small beginnings was the establishment of a "Home" at Fort Wrangel, where, under the loving care of Mrs. McFarland, our first missionary in that country, were gathered several Alaskan children, whom she had taken from their native homes to educate and christianize. Among them was one belonging to the Thlinkits, who was considered particularly bright and promising even at an early age. Her native name was Shik-sha-ni, but her mother called her by the English name "Fannie," and Miss Willard, of Auburn, New York, who was interested in the school, and in this scholar, added to "Fannie" her own name, "Willard." In 1885 Mrs. McFarland came to the States, bringing Fannie with her, in order that she might place her in some good school if the way should open. By visiting and addressing societies, Mrs. McFarland awakened an interest in the Alaskan work, and also in her small charge, who sang her little hymns with a sweetness of voice that compelled attention. Miss Willard signified her willing-

ness to continue Fannie's support in whatever school she might be placed, and the Ladies' Society of the Brown Memorial Church, Baltimore, kindly offered to furnish clothing; this they did during the four years of her school life, thus maintaining an interest in her which has never been lost. Mrs. McFarland placed her in a Home and Day School in Elizabeth, New Jersey, where she won the love and confidence of both teachers and schoolmates. Bright, apt, quick of perception, diligent in her studies, she ranked equally in her class with those of more favored homes and opportunities, and was a credit alike to her teachers, her school, and to the friends who kindly made provision for her during her school life.

In the school room she was a general favorite; in the home a loved and loving member of the family; and a great vacancy was felt when she went out from it in the fall of 1890. She returned to her native Alaska and began her first work as assistant teacher in the Sitka Industrial School, to which position she had been commissioned by the Woman's Board. She was successful from the first, the Alaskan boys and girls calling her "Our Miss Willard," because she was indeed one of their number, and they felt a certain proprietorship in her. To a discouraged pupil she would often say, "If I learned it, you can." The effect would invariably be renewed courage and a "try again." The Alaskans find it hard to say *R*, using an *L* instead. When Miss Willard's little class sang "Down the liver of life we glide," she insisted that it must be "river," not "liver," and over and over again they said, "We can't say it as you do, Miss Willard." "Yes, you can," she answered, "You know I learned to say it right, and you must."

Thus they looked up to her as an example of what was possible, and would sometimes ask, when making extra efforts, "Can I ever become

like Yonkitti Thlinkitti (our Thlinkit lady)?" That she was one of them, understanding the obstacles they must overcome, smoothing their prejudices, and not antagonizing them, gave her influence with her own people, and aided her greatly in her work as a class-room teacher as well as in the Sunday-school. For three years she did excellent service in the Sitka School; then for a time the work was set aside, but was taken up again in a spirit of deep humility, and with the consciousness that the Master Himself had called her again to work in His vineyard.

A teacher and interpreter being needed at Chilkat, Miss Willard was re-commissioned by the Woman's Board, and entered upon her new work in the spring of 1894. As a teacher she did excellent work, and as an interpreter she was almost invaluable to Rev. W. W. Warne, who had charge of the mission at Chilkat. The success which followed her efforts there can be told best by the followiug extracts from letters of the missionaries.

"God has poured out rich blessings upon us ever since Miss Willard came. I can see it and feel it every day; for our work, she is beyond all price."

"I know that you will be pleased to hear that a great revival has reached us, and that to all appearance a good work has resulted. It commenced about October, although there has been unabated interest which has gradually increased, ever since Miss Willard commenced interpreting a year and a half ago."

"Miss Willard spends about six hours each Sabbath in interpreting at our regular meetings which average two hours each, then between Sunday-school and evening service there is generally another hour devoted to callers to talk upon religious subjects; again after evening